

Fruits of the Fields

222
824 jaboticaba
137 mangaba
field caju
axiua
muruci
marmelada
field araticu
pineapple

jubã
unhua
hacerácarã
eten-ã
quenhen-ã
hera-ã
bocubocu baru
iparã

252
137 Dañ is the favorite food of the Mundurucu. It is prepared with Parã chestnuts.

This nut is quite well known, for the province of Parã yearly exports it to Europe by the thousands of hectoliters.

It is known in Europe as the Brazil nut, and contains sixty per cent light and delicately flavored oil.

252 To prepare dañ, the Mundurucu cook the nuts, peel them, soak them, mash them, place them in a pot, cover them with leaves, and allow them to smoke for eight days. [121]

This paste undergoes a sort of fermentation and exhales a strong odor.

Then they mash it again and place it in a pan on the fire.

Thus prepared, dañ keeps for a long time.

262 They also make another kind of dañ from the same nut; once cooked and mashed, it is mixed with fish or meat.

The Mundurucu also feed on banana mush; yam mush; porridge of manioc flour mixed with assai; pataua; bacaba; and maniqueira mush.

[272] In summertime they drink a sort of refreshing beverage made from wild beans which they call uteima.

[273] They do not appear to use alcoholic beverages or to become intoxicated.

● 261 They are very frugal. When game is scarce on rainy winter days, they subsist on sweet potatoes, yams, chestnuts, daú, etc.

251 They preserve the flesh of game by smoking it slowly over the fire in the accustomed manner.

609 Madeira and the Xingú are not *pariwat* to the Tapajós Mundurucú; they are *bari'nye*, "relatives", as explained previously.

The Brazilians are called Baracereru. They are held in esteem, as are also the Parowat, the inhabitants of Belém do Pará, and the Biudecaneruwat, the inhabitants of the capital. The "Cearensen" [people of Ceará?], the Carawat, known as "Messerhelden" have a bad reputation. The *judeu'nye*, the Jews, are hated, as having [731] treated the Mundurucú very badly; after a certain Jew brought in measles on the Cururu and the Barra in 1826, starting an epidemic to which a large number of Mundurucú and Apaicá fell victims. friendship became definitely a thing of the past.

SOME NOTES ON GENERAL CULTURE

- 241 The basis of the economic life of the Mundurucú is hoe culture. They maintain that formerly manioc and all other domesticated plants were unknown among them and that they used to obtain their food supply solely through hunting and through gathering [41] wild fruits. In their hunting they use arrows made of single pieces of wood. The Mundurucú never kills his domestic animals, [231] but he will partake of such meat if another has it at hand. The [222] wild fruits are gathered by the women. Shortage of food can easily prevail, but is not the rule. If meat and fish are lacking, there are wild fruits and the products of the gardens. For the rest, the Mundurucú endures enforced fast with stoic patience without indulging in futile complaints.
- 342 The Mundurucú remember well the time when they used huts with conical roofs. These huts have now been superseded by quadrangular ones with the corners almost always rounded off.
- 776 The Mundurucú have a very clear and sharply defined belief in a Supreme Being. He is called Karusakaibé, and appears to have been a historical personage. He is prayed to; I have gathered a collection of such prayers. More about him will appear infra.
- 562 More too will be said below about social organization as it prevails among the Mundurucú, which topic is a chief one of the present paper. The foregoing summary data are given merely as a background. As regards social organization we may however premise here that the man holds a position of predominance among the Mundurucú. Nevertheless the woman is decidedly respected. [255] On the part of both man and woman, love for the child is marked. [1] [see errata sheet, category 116, p. 57-A.-Analyst]

Murphy: Mundurucú Religion

35

vine in hot water and applying the mixture to the stomach. The other consists of 753
the trunks of very young buriti palms crushed in water. Part of this mixture is 755
drunk, and the rest is applied externally to the torso of the sick person. 278

8. *Ok pipi*, or intestinal pain, is caused by the same *cauši* as *ipsa pipi*, or stom- 757
ach-ache. However, the term *ok pipi* is in reality reserved for dysentery, for it is
always accompanied by severe diarrhea. The medicines used for stomach pains are
considered effective in the relief of intestinal pains also, but two additional cold
remedies are used as specifics for the diarrhea. The roots of a certain shrub are
boiled in water, part of which is taken internally and the rest allowed to steam
below the hammock. The leaves of this shrub are also applied to the abdomen as a
poultice. The same use is made of the leaves of the murirú pagé, a water plant.
The local Brazilians also boil the leaves of this plant and place the steaming pot
below the hammock of a bewitched person. The vapors are believed to cause an
evil object to fall out of the victim's body.

9. *A pipi*, or headache, is treated by mixing envira de castanheira in water and
applying the solution to the head. Unripe Brazil nuts are also grated into water
and similarly applied. Both remedies are considered cold. The nature of the *cauši*
that causes headache was not known by the informants interviewed.

10. The tenth and last ailment is a three-stage sickness generally known by the
name applied to its first stage, called *ujewaii*. In this primary phase, the afflicted
man or woman becomes unhappy and listless and eats mud, soap, and other [261]
inedible substances. The symptoms increase in severity in the next stage, or *yauhú*,
and the victim becomes thin, yellow, and "bloodless." Finally, the patient passes
into the state known as *taubokat*, at the end of which he usually dies. During the
final illness, the person's soul sometimes becomes one of the dreaded wandering
souls. The symptoms are descriptive of the chronic forms of a number of illnesses,
such as malaria, dysentery, and jaundice. The Mundurucú attribute it to a *cauši*
made of roasted earthworms rolled into a ball and spread in the air. No remedies
were known.

A person can be afflicted by more than one *cauši* at a time, and the shaman
often recommends a number of herbal preparations. The shaman does not him-
self administer these remedies, but instructs the kinsmen of the sick person
in their use. They then collect the proper herbs and apply them.

The techniques used by the Mundurucú shaman are so widely distributed 756
throughout eastern South America that any attempt to trace their provenience 171
would be overly lengthy. The shaman's use of tobacco smoke and the techniques
of sucking and massage are almost universal in the Amazon area. Of equally wide
distribution are the use of herbs and the various methods of applying them. In-
fusions, external applications, and steam baths are, as Lowie indicates,⁷ known
among a number of tribes of the region.

One aspect of Mundurucú herbal medicine worthy of further discussion is the 278
division of remedies into hot and cold categories. This distinction is made through- 171
out most of Latin America with regard to both medicines and food. The Mun-

⁷ Lowie, 1948, pp. 51-52.